

Draft Meeting Notes
LCR MSCP Steering Committee October 26, 2016
Southern Nevada Water Authority

Attending

Perri Benemelis	Becky Blasius	Gil Christobal
Scott Feherman	Jessica Gwinn	Chris Hayes
Mike Hulin	Vineetha Kartha	Jimmy Knowles
Kurumi Kuroda	John Ladd	Bill Lamb
Kara Mathews	Terry Murphy	Wade Noble
Peggy Roefer	Sara Price	Carrie Ronning
Seth Shanahan	Laura Simonek	Jon Sjoberg
Faye Streier	John Swatzell	John Swett
Andrew Trouette	Ruth Valencia	Laura Vecerina
David Vigil	Scott Wiedermann	

Attending Via Conference Call

Bert Bell	Linda Carbone	Jim DeVos
Chris Harris	Ned Hyduke	Jessica Neuwerth
Dale Turner	Doyle Wilson	

ADMINISTRATIVE

Introductions

The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m. by Perri Benemelis. There were self-introductions of all attending.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

Approve April 27, 2016 Meeting Notes

The April 27, 2016 meeting notes were approved. (Moved by Jon Sjoberg, seconded by Bill Lamb and adopted by consensus)

WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

John Swett discussed the federal budget for FY17. He noted that the federal government was operating under a continuing resolution through December 9th and that Congress and the President would have to pass another continuing resolution or budget by that time. John noted that Reclamation had received all 1st quarter non-federal funding contributions. He also noted that we had received the acceptance letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Final Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2017 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishment Report.

PROCESS UPDATES

Northern Mexican Gartersnake

John Swett reviewed Program Decision Document (PDD) 17-001. He noted that the purpose of PDD 17-001 was to provide the Steering Committee information on whether to add the northern Mexican gartersnake as a covered species to the LCR MSCP. John reviewed the background information on the listing of the northern Mexican gartersnake, the species model used to analyze take, the analysis of impacts from covered activities, and the proposed conservation measures for the northern Mexican gartersnake. He noted that the decision document also provided information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's processing time for permit applications.

John noted that if the Steering Committee decided to add the northern Mexican gartersnake to the LCR MSCP that there were three options for coverage: Option #1 Reaches 1-3, Option #2 Reaches 1-5, Option #3 Reaches 1-7. If Option #3 were selected, it would cover the same geographic area as the other covered species. John stated that adding the northern Mexican gartersnake as a covered species would not require additional land cover to be created. A portion of the land cover already created or planned to be created would also be managed for the northern Mexican gartersnake. John noted that since the amount of land cover was not increasing, including the northern Mexican gartersnake as a covered species would not increase program costs. There would be some unquantifiable costs at conservation areas for implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, but this would be covered within existing program funds.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Steering Committee would move forward with adding the northern Mexican gartersnake to the LCR MSCP and that Option #3 (Reaches 1-7) should be pursued. The following motion was presented to the Steering Committee for consideration.

“The Steering Committee approves adding the northern Mexican gartersnake as a covered species to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program using PDD 17-001 as a starting point to initiate discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding consultation” (moved by Wade Noble and seconded by Vineetha Kartha).

During discussion of the motion, it was suggested that the language “Option #3 (Reaches 1-7) in Attachment 2” be added to the motion after the reference to PDD 17-001. Both Wade Noble and Vineetha Kartha were okay with the addition to the motion. The following revised motion was approved by consensus.

“The Steering Committee approves adding the northern Mexican gartersnake as a covered species to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program using PDD 17-001, **and Option #3 (Reaches 1-7) in Attachment 2**, as a starting point to initiate discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding consultation” (moved by Wade Noble and seconded by Vineetha Kartha and approved by consensus)

Habitat Creation Status

Terry Murphy provided an update on the remaining amount of habitat required by the program. He noted that 5,452 acres of land cover had been created by the end of FY16. This consisted of 3,650 acres of cottonwood-willow, 1,346 acres of honey mesquite, 361 acres of marsh, and 95 acres of backwater. This included the new conservation area, Parker Dam Camp, which provided 80 acres of mesquite. Terry noted that Planet Ranch will provide for over 400 acres of active river and riparian habitat and 396 acres of downstream credit when completed. Mohave Valley Conservation Area when completed will provide 50 acres of backwater. Terry noted that future projects such as PVER-South and the MWD Lands within Palo Verde Irrigation District will also provide additional land cover.

GENERAL

Laura Vecerina said that she would be sending out the current voting list to Steering Committee members to confirm or update current voting and alternate members’ information.

STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Laura Vecerina reviewed the Steering Committee schedule noting a number of upcoming conferences. She indicated that a Work Group meeting would be scheduled in late March before the April Steering Committee meeting.

SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS

The Steering Committee took action on one item.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:18 am